

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A belt-type fixing device, comprising:
an endless sheet-like fixing belt to be heated wound around a supporting member and around a nip forming member that is fixed in a position away from the supporting member so as to be incapable of rotating, and

a pressurizing roller which can be driven to rotate, which is in pressure contact with the nip forming member with the fixing belt interposed between, and of which part in contact with the fixing belt forms a fixing nip,

wherein a surface of the nip forming member that is opposite to the pressurizing roller is configured as a curved surface extending along an outer circumferential surface of the pressurizing roller so that a pressure distribution in the fixing nip is made generally flat with respect to a paper feeding direction,

the fixing belt is rotated while being slid on the nip forming member by rotational drive of the pressurizing roller, and

a contact area between the fixing belt and the nip forming member outside the fixing nip is smaller on an entrance side of the fixing nip than on an exit side of the fixing nip.

2. (Original) A belt-type fixing device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the supporting member is a rotatable heating roller and an outside diameter of the heating roller is larger than a width of the nip forming member with respect to the paper feeding direction.

3. (Original) A belt-type fixing device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the heating roller is in a position lower than the nip forming member, in a configuration in which a recording medium is vertically passed through the fixing nip.

4. (Original) A belt-type fixing device as claimed in claim 1, wherein an angle which a pre-fixation guide for guiding introduction of a recording medium into the fixing nip forms with the fixing belt on the entrance side of the fixing nip is in a range from 30° to 70°.

5. (Currently Amended) A belt-type fixing device as claimed in claim 1, wherein a distance between ~~[[the]]~~ a pre-fixation guide for guiding introduction of a recording medium into the fixing nip and a line extending in parallel with the pre-fixation guide from a point of contact between the nip forming member and the fixing belt on the entrance side of the fixing nip is not less than 3 mm.

6. (Currently Amended) A belt-type fixing device for fixing a toner image on a paper, the belt-type fixing device comprising:

- an endless-sheet-like belt member wound around a heating roller having a heater and around a nip forming member that is fixed so as to be incapable of rotating, and
- a pressurizing roller which has an elasticity, which is driven to rotate, which is relatively pressed against the nip forming member through the belt member, and on which the paper is passed through a fixing nip that is contact part between the pressurizing roller and the belt member,

wherein a position of the heating roller is on upstream side relative to the nip forming member with respect to a direction in which the paper being passed through the fixing nip is conveyed, and

a contact area between the belt member and the nip forming member outside the fixing nip is smaller on an entrance side of the fixing nip than on an exit side of the fixing nip.

7. (Original) A belt-type fixing device as claimed in claim 6, wherein a surface of the nip forming member that is opposite to the pressurizing roller has a shape extending along an outer circumferential surface of the pressurizing roller.